

REMARKS

Claims 4-6 are all the claims pending in the application.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for conducting a telephonic interview with Applicant's representative on December 18, 2003. The following is a summary of the substance of the interview, as well as a traversal of the Examiner's prior art rejection.

At the outset of the interview, the Examiner agreed that Endo does not disclose that its molded part 3 is tentatively retained by elements 15 and 17. However, according to the Examiner, the molded part 3 is tentatively retained when it has been fully moved in the D-E direction (Fig. 2), and that further movement of part 3 in the B-C direction corresponds to the movement by a predetermined amount greater than an amount necessary for tentatively retaining molded part 3 with respect to molded part 2. To support this position, the Examiner cited Endo at col. 7, lines 22-31.

In reply to the Examiner's analysis, Applicant's representative noted that, even under the Examiner's broad interpretation of Applicant's claim language and the teachings of Endo, in Endo the "movement by a predetermined greater amount" means movement in a direction (i.e., B-C - vertically) different from the direction of movement for tentative retention (i.e., D-E - horizontally).

The Examiner agreed that Applicant's invention differs from Endo at least in this regard, and suggested that the claims be amended explicitly to recite the direction of movement, and that such an amendment should distinguish the claims from Endo, but will require additional consideration and search.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114
U.S. Appln No. 09/739,671

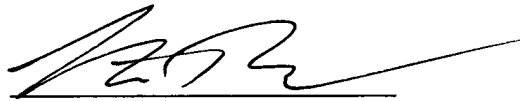
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Accordingly, Applicant amends independent claim 4 even more clearly to recite the step of moving by said predetermined amount. As discussed during the interview, this amendment is merely a clarifying amendment, and does not limit the scope of equivalents covered by claim 4. No estoppel is created.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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